

owner of a tax assistance firm is making a donation for every tax return he prepares. Worshipers at a Buddhist temple in Houston collected thousands of dollars in cash to send to their sister temple in Sri Lanka. Some people are selling personal items on the Internet and donating the cash to the charities. Many corporations are matching contributions by their employees. And several have shown exceptional generosity by donating large amounts of cash and products to the relief efforts.

Presidents Clinton and Bush will be speaking about the countless ways individuals and businesses can support this urgent cause. I ask every American to contribute as they are able to do so. For more information about how to make a donation, you can visit the USA Freedom Corps web site at www.usafreedomcorps.gov.

Americans have suffered sudden catastrophe many times in our own history, from massive earthquakes in Anchorage and San Francisco to destructive wildfires in the West to the series of hurricanes that struck Florida last year. From our own experiences, we know that nothing can take away the grief of those affected by tragedy. We also know that Americans have a history of rising to meet great humanitarian challenges and of providing hope to suffering peoples. As men and women across the devastated region begin to rebuild, we offer our sustained compassion and our generosity and our assurance that America will be there to help.

The Presidents and I will be going to the embassies of the countries affected to pay our Nation's respects. I'm so grateful that both President Bush and President Clinton have taken time out of their busy schedules to not only serve as a catalyst for people to give money to help but also to join me and Laura in paying our deepest respects to those nations that have been affected by the tsunamis. As well the Presidents will return to the White House compound to talk to members of the press about how to better effect this great relief effort that is now going on in our Nation.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida.

The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks After Signing the Book of Condolence at the Indonesian Embassy

January 3, 2005

It's our honor to come today to pay our respects for those in Indonesia who suffered under this tremendous disaster. I appreciate the former Presidents joining me. I'm proud Laura is here too as we sign the condolence book.

We're also committed to helping the Indonesian Government and the people of Indonesia. Presidents Clinton and Bush have agreed to help tap into the great generosity of the American people by serving as cochairmen of what will be a massive private relief effort. Of course, I will continue to make sure our Government provides relief as well. I look forward to working with the Indonesian Government to help those who need food and medicine and water and shelter to get their lives back in order so that the great country of Indonesia can rise up from this disaster and provide the hope necessary for the people of that important country.

It's our honor to be here with our friend and ally. Mr. Ambassador, thank you for having us. May God bless the people of Indonesia.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:40 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Soemadi Brotodiningrat, Indonesian Ambassador to the United States.

Remarks After Signing the Book of Condolence at the Indian Embassy and an Exchange With Reporters

January 3, 2005

Q. Mr. President, you have come this far; are you planning to extend your visit someday to India? It could be before your Presidency—

The President. Well, I appreciate that very much. I was just telling the Ambassador, when I spoke to the Prime Minister I assured him that my intentions were to make it this year to India. In the meantime, though, our